

THE FORTUNATE BLIND

West, Fred Curry

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The Fortunate Blind

A Tribute to the Inventor of the
“Typewriter” for the Blind



Mr. Hall

Business Equipment Topics
Vol LXXXIV - No 2 - Jun 1933

By FRED CURRY WEST

Editor of “Typing Tips,” House Organ
of The Miller-Bryant-Pierce Co., Aurora,
Illinois, from Which This Story is Re-
printed by Special Permission

THE name of Frank H. Hall has gone down in Illinois history as a symbolism of marked service performed for individual and state, without thought of personal remuneration—particularly (so far as this record is concerned) in behalf of the blind. Real benefit to the really blind must be, of necessity, free.

One of Mr. Hall's outstanding gifts to the blind of the world is the Braille Writer (the “typewriter” by which raised words are “printed” or “type-written” on paper so that the blind may correspond the same as folks who have eyes to read instead of only fingers to feel). He invented it. He refused to accept royalties on its sale. He devised it so simply that it could be manufactured at a reasonable price, and he specifically arranged that the manufacturers should produce it for the blind at a price devoid of all unnecessary profits. To the pupils of the Illinois School for the Blind, of which he was superintendent when the Braille Writer was invented, he stipulated that the machine should be sold for ten dollars each—a price three dollars less than it was then sold at cost generally.

This interesting machine, pictured herewith, is made by Mr. Mehnke of Oak Park. The machine is operated by pressing one or more of the keys (in a manner quite similar to piano playing), each operation or pressure producing one letter of a word; or some contraction representing common words and parts of words, such as “the,” “or,” “ing,” “in.”

*We Find a Blind Hostess
Charming*

I was referred to the Mehnke home to get a first-hand impression of the benefits this



The Braille Writer, invented by Frank H. Hall, the
noted blind educator and philosopher

Braille Writer could procure to a blind family. Mrs. West and I called on Mr. and Mrs. Mehnke. They are both blind—but one would never suspect it from the comfort and modern elegance in which they live. Mr. Mehnke is a piano tuner—a piano tuner of such exceptional skill, I am told by a friend who lives in Wilmette, Ill., that clients come and get him from cities many miles distant, to have him tune their pianos.

Both he and his lovely wife entertained us as though they could see perfectly. They moved about their home without any perceptible hesitation. Only that one watched, would he observe that they touched lightly the corners of chair, desk, piano, davenport, as they walked. Mrs. Mehnke cooked the dinner and put it on with her own hands. Our visit was one of unusual pleasure and inspiring revelation in every way—absolutely devoid of any feeling of pity or embarrassment, so free and cordial were they.

After demonstrations on the Braille Writer by both Mr. and Mrs. Mehnke, results of which are shown in the illustration at the bottom of this page, Mr. Mehnke opened a regular typewriter of a standard make, on which he and his wife correspond with folks who are not trained to read Braille Writing. He informed me facetiously that he uses the most modern method of writing—the TOUCH system. Also, that the “visible” writing feature of modern typewriters has no particular appeal for him as he never has occasion to look at the writing.

It is difficult for me to curtail this story to the bare essential facts relating to this Braille Writer growing out of my brief study of the facts, so



Reproduction of actual Braille writing done on the Hall machine. Lines 1, 2 and 3 are the alphabet, the first dot of the first line indicating “capital letter.” Lines 4 and 5 are the numerals, 1 to 10, which correspond to the first ten letters of the alphabet (a to j) with the form (reversed L) preceding each as the symbol of “numeral.” The Miller-Bryant-Pierce Company is entitled to have readers inquire as to what the 6th and 7th lines say, in deference to their courtesy in permitting BUSINESS EQUIPMENT TOPICS to use this and the other illustrations.

A Buyer Looks Over the Salesman

The concluding article of the series in which W. A. Metzger, Advertising Manager of the Royal Typewriter Company, has discussed the ingredients of ideal salesmanship.

FRANKLY, it is as difficult to give the qualifications of the ideal salesman as it would be to give those of the ideal woman. Opinions (and fortunately) differ. Perhaps, though, we can in both cases lay down certain principles of excellence. In this article, we shall confine ourselves to the distinguishing qualities of the man who appears to the average buyer to be a good salesman.

1. Appearance

I speak of this, at the risk of appearing hackneyed, but I think every reader of this book realizes that it is not necessary to stress neatness, cleanliness and such obvious points of appearance. My thought is this: I like a salesman who approaches me with a spirit of friendliness, frankness and enthusiasm. I should caution all selling representatives to strive earnestly against discouragement and monotony.

As a former (and indifferent) salesman, I realize that it is sometimes difficult to approach a prospect with entire confidence and forcefulness just after having lost a sale or undergone an unsatisfactory interview. But the appearance of a good salesman never varies toward the morose.

A display of frankness on the part of a salesman is invaluable. Even if the salesman has up his sleeve an ace-in-the-hole, he should constantly give the buyer the impression that every fact at his disposal is on the table.

2. Versatility

You have probably gathered from past articles of this series that there are certain types of salesmen whom I just don't like. All buyers, and I will admit we are a prejudiced lot, are that way.

I have seen salesmen of the high-powered type come into my office, meek and unassuming, just because they felt that that attitude was right down my alley. This displays resourcefulness and versatility, good qualities of the ideal salesman. He is one who endeavors to be "all things to all men"; tries to appear to be the kind of an individual he feels the buyer will respect; strives to use the type of bait the buyer prefers. He appeals to the purchaser's vul-



nerable weakness; whether it be pride, thrift, vanity, gullibility, avarice.

3. Tact

The ideal salesman is one familiar not only with the matter of salesmanship, but also with the manner of salesmanship. Tact in a salesman is that quality which dictates to him his method of putting across to the buyer the material he has at hand.

It is a favorite approach of salesmen to bustle into my office with the information that they have been doing considerable work for such and such a competitor. Now, I offer this as an example of bad judgment, or lack of tact. Naturally, I respect the work of competitors, and I am aware of the advantage inherent in a supplier who is somewhat familiar with the typewriter business. But the tactful salesman puts across these points in a subtle and more effective manner. He would say, for instance: "*Mr. Metzger, an additional advantage which we can offer, is that for some years we have been doing work of a similar nature to that required by you. We even had the opportunity of preparing this little folder, in which I thought you might be interested as being the work of a competitive concern, for the Blank Blank Typewriter Company.*"

A price blurted out at the beginning of an interview has a far more dampening effect on a buyer than the same price casually mentioned after the salesman has worked the purchaser up into a buying mood. The tactful salesman knows when.

4. Knowledge

Finally, I like a salesman who knows his stuff. There is no substitute for knowledge in selling, and the average

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intensely interesting they are, but space here forbids my writing more. Delve into them yourself. You will be charmed and inspired by so doing, I am certain.

Mr. Hall's remarkable career is responsible, in addition to the invention of the Braille Writer, for resultant revolution of Braille printing. He is also responsible for the introduction of education of the sort which teaches pupils (who can see) how to do their specific life work, being the founder of the Sugar Grove Normal and Industrial School and of the Illinois Farmers' Institute.

Refuses Salary Increase—Unsuccessfully!

In these, as in his work in the Illinois School for the Blind and in the superintendency of the public schools of Aurora and other cities, and in hospital responsibilities during the Civil War in his early life, his every effort was to help humanity without undue remuneration. And, remarkable to state, in spite of that characteristic, he suffered no loss on that account. Rather, increases in salary and other emoluments invaluable to him, were literally forced on him by those who were in position to see that he was properly repaid.

At one time a school board proposed to increase his salary as superintendent from \$2,000 to \$2,800. There were other things more essential Mr. Hall thought than salary increase for him at that time, and he declined to accept it, under the circumstances. One of the board members jumped to his feet and moved that they comply with Mr. Hall's wishes by continuing him at \$2,000 as high school superintendent and \$800.00 as grade school superintendent. And the motion was unanimously passed over his ardent objections.

Frank H. Hall's life is an immortal demonstration that "It is more beneficial to give than to receive." Fortunate are the blind, that he lived.

Coxhead Acquires Varsityper

AN outstanding piece of news of the month is that Ralph C. Coxhead has entered the writing machine business. Varsityper, the versatile machine famous for its changeable type, was last month purchased by and is now a division of the Ralph C. Coxhead Corporation with general offices at 17 Park Place, New York City.

Mr. Coxhead, whose major business career has been devoted to the development and exploitation of calculating and bookkeeping machines, is full of enthusiasm for the important addition to his activity. The contention that ordinary type-writing, in this modern



Ralph C. Coxhead

age, constitutes a limitation in usage of writing instruments as his complete endorsement. He points out the extreme extent to which calculating and bookkeeping machines have been modernized and, aware of the ever growing demand

for other office machines and equipment capable of filling special requirements, entertains the impression that type-writing, generically, has not made corresponding advancement. The Varsityper appealed strongly to his thoughts as the writing machine of the future. Its possibilities, as compared with mechanical limitations imposed by critics against the ordinary typewriter, presented a stirring picture to Mr. Coxhead. Unappreciated by the rank and file, and capable in his mind of untold development in typewriter usage and application, it was no great surprise to many when it was last month announced that he had acquired the Varsityper.

As a member of the business machines industry, Mr. Coxhead is equally well known in the United States and Europe. A pronounced success was made with his original representation of the Mercedes calculating machine. Significant has been his sales development of the Mathematon calculating machine. He brings to Varsityper a high degree of executive talent.

Walter J. Hausman, creator of the "Varsityper Idea," who has piloted Varsityper for the past six years, will continue as general manager. His accomplishments are so many that within him, as an individual, reposes the mainspring of all Varsityper activity. His association with Mr. Coxhead is the outcome of negotiations long conducted and enables him to put into practice a number of well formulated and carefully designed plans. Associated with Mr. Hausman as general manager of the Varsityper Division of the Ralph C. Coxhead Corporation are Miss Mae Lennon, assistant; Henry Resch, factory manager, and John Ritz, service supervisor. In similar manner, other experienced key employees have been retained and still others will be added as rapidly as possible. Mr. Hausman's offices are now located with those of the Ralph C. Coxhead Corporation at 17 Park Place, New York City. The factory has been moved to a new daylight location in the middle of the city where better service can be rendered to both local and distant customers.

Manufacture of the new metal faced type plates, as well as the fabrication and assembly of machines, is well under way. Orders for Varsityper machines, from both the United States and other countries, have lately been particularly encouraging and a busier factory schedule is already justified. There will be no radical change in general policy relative to sales or manufacture. New requests for Varsityper representation from dealers, domestic and foreign, are now being considered. Every indication points to a wider distribution for Varsityper than ever before. This publication joins their many other friends in extending felicitations especially to Messrs. Coxhead and Hausman.

This trade journal stands out as the only organ of the industry giving all of the news FIRST.



Walter J. Hausman

Bergman Visits Home Office

ABOUT a year ago it was reported in these columns that Alfred N. Bergman had joined the Royal Typewriter Company, being appointed company representative in Germany. His zealous up-building of Royal interests in Germany, working out of Berlin headquarters, has been marked by decided progress. Mr. Bergman spent most of last month on a visit in New York with home office officials, returning to Germany with plans for continued pursuit toward a full share of Royal business in Germany.



Alfred N. Bergman

New Glogowski Organization

UNDER the title of "Textothek," Glogowski & Co., G.m.b.H., the old Glogowski name has been re-established. Under the management of Kurt Glogowski and for the purpose of taking over the sale of the dictating machine formerly manufactured by Echophon Aktiengesellschaft as the "Dailygraph," the new firm has been formed with offices at 65a Friedrich Strasse, Berlin, Germany, as in earlier days. Heino C. Macke, who was formerly with Echophon A/G, has joined the company as sales director. Mr. Glogowski has changed the name of the dictating machine from Echophon to Textophon, the complete system and equipment being christened Textothek. A new German sales organization is being built up; a branch office for Westphalia and the Rhineland has been opened at Duesseldorf. A start has also been made to establish the "Textophon" in Budapest, Hungary. Several improvements have been embodied in the machine itself, and, owing to increased production, a considerable reduction in price has become possible.

Egli's 40th Anniversary

THIS summer the firm of H. W. Egli S.A., whose factory is at Wollishofen, Zurich, Switzerland, is able to look back on 40 years' experience and activity.

During these four decades they have devoted themselves exclusively to the construction and development of calculating machines. For the first 20 years, production was limited to the "Millionaire." This machine has often been referred to as the "Rolls Royce" of calculating machines. Some of these machines, which were sold before the beginning of the present century, are still in daily use and giving good service.

In the years 1913-14 a new machine was produced, i.e., the "Madas." This machine was the first and for some years the only, machine constructed on the "Thomas" system which performed division calculations entirely automatically. It also introduced for the first time, in this type

of machine, a sliding carriage in place of the previous lift-up pattern.

In the following years further improvements were introduced, including electric drive, keyboard-setting (in place of sliding pointers) and a device for interrupting the automatic division at any stage in the calculation. Then came the model embodying all these features, plus semi-automatic multiplication, and finally a model with fully-automatic multiplication. Concurrently the "Millionaire" machine also underwent further improvements.

By this time there was an unmistakable and general demand for a smaller and more compact machine than any of the foregoing. So H. W. Egli S.A. undertook the construction of what they call the "Madas Portable" calculating machine. Successful production of this comparatively small machine presented considerable difficulties at the outset, because the manufacturers had to find a way to reduce the size of the mechanism without sacrifice of solidity or mechanical reliability. It was 1931 before the "Madas Portable" was put on the market; it was made in three models for both manual and electrical operation. These machines were first made for semi-automatic division, together with electric carriage movement and other advantageous features.

Ernest Green Visits Ames

ERNEST GREEN, managing director of Longs Ltd., London, European distributors for Ames products, arrived in New York on the S.S. "Scythia" for one of his



Ernest Green

periodic visits to the Ames Supply Company. Our old friend is this time accompanied by his youngest son, E. M. Green, to whom it must be a great adventure to visit the United States for the first time with dad. Especially as their arrival coincides with opening of the Chicago World's Fair, where father and son will spend many an interesting day, will they enjoy their stay. Ernest Green is spending considerable time at Chicago headquarters to

make himself better acquainted with the different new lines that the Ames Supply Company recently placed on the market, and with the new platen manufacturing process that has been installed for a bigger and better platen service. He will also discuss the question of strengthening the European distribution organization, various changes in the economic situation in different countries necessitate adjustments in sales policies. Ernest Green is well known on both sides of the Atlantic as one of the most genial and well-reputed typewriter and parts distributors in Great Britain who has also developed an important business throughout Europe. This trade journal is happy to join in cordial welcome to Ernest Green and son on the occasion of this visit to America.



